

The CONSTITUTION and STATEMENT OF FAITH of THE ASSOCIATION OF INDEPENDENT BAPTIST CHURCHES OF ILLINOIS

PREAMBLE

This Baptist Association of Illinois is a voluntary fellowship of sovereign, autonomous, independent, and Bible-believing Baptist Churches working together to extend the testimony of Baptists in Illinois. This Association is wholly separated from all other organizations, Baptist as well as non-Baptist. There is a fraternal relationship only to other separatist Baptist agencies. The several churches in this Association are held together by a common abiding love for and confidence in one another. Thus banded together, this Association seeks to move forward with the blessing of the Holy Spirit in evangelizing in the state of Illinois through its Baptist witness.

ARTICLE I – NAME

The name of this organization shall be The Association of Independent Baptist Churches of Illinois.

ARTICLE II – PURPOSE

The Association of Independent Baptist Churches of Illinois is an association of independent fundamental Baptist churches that exist:

- to proclaim the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ in and through the ministry of local independent Baptist churches.
- to contend for the historical Baptist expression of the faith once delivered to the saints.
- to provide fellowship for existing churches who are of like faith and practice.
- to establish new independent fundamental Baptist churches throughout the state of Illinois.
- to assist the various local churches as needed and requested by the local church.

ARTICLE III – DOCTRINAL STATEMENT

1. The Bible:

We believe in the verbal, plenary inspiration both of the Old and New Testaments. We believe that holy men of God were "moved by the Holy Spirit" to write the very words of Scripture. We believe that this divine inspiration extends equally and fully to all parts of the Scripture. The Scriptures are therefore infallible and inerrant in their totality in the original writings and are the final authority in all matters of faith and practice.

While honoring honest differences of opinion in how God has preserved His Word, we reaffirm with our Baptist forefathers that God, by His singular care and providence, has preserved His Word pure in all ages.

2. The Godhead:

We believe in One Triune God, existing eternally in three persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. These three are one God having precisely the same nature, attributes, and perfections and are worthy of precisely the same honor, confidence, and obedience.

3. Jesus Christ:

We believe the Lord Jesus Christ, being eternally the Son of God, was ordained by the Father to be the mediator between God and man. In the fullness of time God sent forth His Son, conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary, to fully reveal God and to redeem sinful, fallen man. Having the very nature of God, He took upon Himself the nature of man, becoming eternally the God-man. The sinless Son of God gave Himself as a voluntary, substitutionary sacrifice on the cross for the sins of all men. After three days the Lord Jesus arose from the grave, ascended to Heaven, and is seated at the right hand of the Father, where He now makes intercession for us and where He also awaits the Father's appointed time to come again for His own.

4. Holy Spirit:

We believe that the Holy Spirit is the third member of the Godhead and possesses the same nature, attributes, and perfections as the other members of the Trinity. We believe that God the Holy Spirit calls, regenerates, baptizes,

indwells fills, empowers, and seals the believer until the day of redemption. We reject the practice and doctrine of the modern Charismatic Movement.

5. Salvation:

We believe that man was created in the image of God, that he sinned and thereby incurred not only physical death but also spiritual death. We also believe that all humanity is born with a sinful nature and are sinners in thought, word, and deed.

We believe that salvation is the gift of God, apart from any human merit, brought to men by grace and received through personal faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, whose blood was shed on the Cross of Calvary for the forgiveness of sins. All who receive His grace through faith are born again sons of God, and they are kept by God's power and secure in Christ forever.

6. Sanctification:

We believe that sanctification is the process by which we are made partakers of God's holiness. This is a progressive work which begins at regeneration and is carried on in the lives of believers throughout their earthly life. Sanctification is accomplished by the presence and power of the Holy Spirit and our continual use of the appointed means, namely the Word of God, self-examination, self-denial, watchfulness, and prayer.

7. Creation:

We believe in the biblical account of creation that the heavens and the earth were created out of nothing by the direct act of the Triune God in six literal twenty-four-hour days. We believe that God exists independent of His creation and yet sustains, cares for, and watches over all He has created. We reject all forms of naturalistic evolution and all attempts to incorporate it into the biblical account of creation.

8. Man:

We believe that man was created in God's image by the direct act of God. Having been created in a state of holiness and righteousness, Adam willfully sinned against God and fell from that state. The consequence of the fall is that all men are totally depraved—sinners both by nature and by choice. Fallen man is devoid of the ability to do good and to please God. Man, therefore, apart from the grace of God, is already under the condemnation of God and will be consigned forever to eternal conscious punishment.

9. Separation:

We believe the biblical doctrine of separation encompasses these areas:

a. The separation of the local church from all affiliation and fellowship with those who deny the truths of the Christian faith and from those who are content to walk in fellowship with unbelief, inclusivism, and new-evangelicalism.

b. The separation of the individual believer is to walk in obedience to the Lord's commands and to avoid all worldly practices that would dishonor the Lord Jesus Christ.

10. The Church:

We believe the Church is a living, spiritual body of which Christ is the Head and which all regenerated people in this age are a part. We believe that the Church, which is His body, is peculiar to the age of grace and entirely distinct from Israel. Furthermore, we believe that a local church is a company of believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, immersed upon a credible confession of faith and associated for worship, fellowship, and service. We believe that the local church is autonomous, the center of God's program for this age, and that every Christian is Scripture-bound to give their unhindered support to the ministry of the local church. We believe the primary purpose of the local church is to bring glory to God by evangelizing the world and edifying believers. The Association of Independent Baptist Churches of Illinois exists to assist local churches in fulfilling this stated mission.

11. The Ordinances:

We believe there are two ordinances for the church: baptism and the Lord's Supper. Baptism is by immersion of a believer in water. Baptism is a prerequisite to membership in the local church. The Lord's Supper is the commemoration of the Lord's death until He comes.

12. Future Things:

We believe in the imminent, pretribulational rapture of the church to Heaven, followed by a seven-year tribulation upon all the earth. At the end of the tribulation, Jesus shall come to the earth in power and glory with His Church to establish His millennial reign. Satan will be bound, and Israel shall be re-established in the Promised Land. At the end of this glorious reign, Satan shall be loosed and lead a rebellion against Christ, at which time Satan shall be defeated and then banished to the Lake of Fire forever.

The unrighteous dead shall be judged at the Great White Throne and shall be condemned to everlasting conscious punishment in the Lake of Fire. The righteous shall be in eternal conscious blessedness in the presence of the Lord.

13. Marriage:

We believe:

- That marriage of one man and one woman for life, as created by God, sanctioned by Christ, and approved by the Apostles, is God's normal plan.
- That some individuals are called and gifted by God to a single life and that this is also biblical and wholly good.
- That all other expressions of sexuality, such as homosexuality, bisexuality, premarital and extramarital sex, are expressly forbidden in Scripture and are not acceptable.
- That pastors and deacons, as leaders in the church, are to be examples in marriage and family life and must not be divorced.

ARTICLE IV – JURISDICTION

The Association shall have no jurisdiction over the local church and shall not officially represent any church or churches in any convention, council, federation, or association. All such relationships shall be between the individual local church and those organizations.

ARTICLE V – MEMBERSHIP AND VOTING

1. Membership

a. The fellowship of this Association shall consist of Baptist churches in the state of Illinois in full agreement with the Articles of this Constitution. A local assembly must vote themselves into the Association and then be voted into fellowship at the Annual Meeting. By definition Baptist churches believe the following biblical doctrines:

- Biblical Authority—the Bible is the final authority in all matters of faith and practice;
- Autonomy of the Local Church—the local church is an independent body accountable only to the Lord Jesus Christ;
- Priesthood of the Believer—every believer is a priest of God and may enter into His presence directly through our Great High Priest, Jesus Christ;
- Two Ordinances—the local church shall practice two ordinances: baptism by immersion in water and the Lord's Supper commonly called communion;
- Individual Soul Liberty—every believer has the liberty and responsibility to believe as his own conscience dictates, within the framework of the Word of God; however, this does not give license to sin;
- Saved, Baptized Membership—local church membership is restricted to individuals who give believable testimony of a personal faith in Christ and have publicly identified themselves with Him in believer's baptism (churches with unbaptized members will not be accepted into the Association);
- Two Offices—pastor and deacon, these two offices exist within the local church, not as a hierarchy outside of or over the local church; and
- Separation of Church and State—God has established the church and the civil government; He gave each its own distinct sphere of operation; neither should control the other.

b. Any church ceasing to be in agreement with the Articles of this Constitution may withdraw membership by voting themselves out of the Association. Notification must then be made to the Missions Director and Board of Directors. If such a church fails to withdraw membership, charges in writing may be made to the Board of Directors, which will take appropriate action and make recommendations to the Association.

c. Churches will not be allowed to join or remain in the Association if the pastor or a deacon has been divorced and/or has married a divorced woman.

d. Churches will not be allowed to join or remain in the Association if they are cooperating within new-evangelical circles.

e. Church membership requirements:

1. Active status—churches in the Association have active status when they have supported financially during the fiscal year and/or have attended the Annual Meeting at least once during the past three years. If not, the church will be placed on inactive status for one year.

2. Inactive status—churches in the Association who have not supported financially during the fiscal year and/or have not attended the Annual Meeting in the last three years. Then, if no interest is shown by attendance and/or financial support, they are to be notified by the Missions Director that they are no longer a member.

3. No person from a non-financially supporting church can hold any office.

2. Voting:

a. Each fellowshipping church of the Association shall be entitled to voting privileges in the following manner: Pastor plus four messengers up to the first one hundred members, and one additional messenger for each additional one hundred members or fraction thereof. This is providing that the voting church meets the requirements of active status.

b. Vote by proxy is acceptable excluding the Annual Meeting.

c. Voting members must be at least twenty-one years old and an immersed member of the Baptist church he or she represents.

ARTICLE VI – OFFICERS & COMMITTEES

1. The officers of this Association shall be: President, Vice-President, Secretary, and Treasurer.

2. The officers shall be elected at the Annual Meeting and shall hold office for one year.

3. If a vacancy occurs within a fiscal year, the Board of Directors shall elect a replacement.

4. The duties of the officers are as follows:

a. President—the president shall chair all main functions of the Association and the Board of Directors.

b. Vice-President—the vice-president shall serve in absence of the president and shall be the chairman of the nominating committee. The Board of Directors will select two other board members to complete the committee. They will prepare a slate of officers and representatives for election by the Association at the Annual Meeting.

c. Secretary—the secretary shall keep a complete and accurate record of all actions and minutes of the Association and the Board of Directors and shall be the chairman of the membership committee. The Executive Committee shall serve as the membership committee, reviewing and making recommendations to the Association concerning all applications for membership in or withdrawal from the Association.

d. Treasurer—the treasurer shall be responsible for the oversight of receiving, disbursing, and recording of all monies received according to the direction of the Association or Board of Directors and shall be the chairman of the audit committee.

5. The above referenced officers shall be called the Executive Committee. Other committees may be elected or appointed by the Association or the Board of Directors.

ARTICLE VII – BOARD OF DIRECTORS

1. The Board of Directors shall consist of the officers of the Association, along with twelve representatives and elected by the Association at the Annual Meeting.

2. Each representative elected to the Board of Directors shall be privileged to serve no more than two consecutive three-year terms or any part thereof. Thereafter, such representatives shall not be eligible to be a candidate for the Board of Directors for a period of one year from the last day of the second term in which he has served.

3. Each Executive Committee Officer shall be privileged to serve no more than six consecutive terms of one year in one or in an accumulation of offices held. Thereafter such Executive Committee officers shall not be eligible to be a candidate for the Board of Directors for one year and the Executive Committee for two years from last day of their last term.
4. Representatives shall be elected for a three-year term, up to four of each being elected each year. They may serve an additional successive term for a total of not more than six successive years.
5. A vacancy within a fiscal year may be filled by appointment of the Board of Directors.
6. The Board of Directors shall meet at the direction of the President.
7. All business approved by the Association at the Annual Meeting may be transacted during the fiscal year by the Board of Directors.
8. Seven Directors shall constitute a quorum of the Board. Other Committees may be appointed by the Association or the Board of Directors.

ARTICLE VIII – MISSIONS DIRECTOR

The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the Association shall be the Missions Director, who shall be employed by the Board of Directors upon recommendation of the Executive Committee. If a vacancy occurs and if the Board of Directors deems necessary, they may bring recommendation concerning a Missions Director to the Association at the Annual Meeting or at any specially called meeting, including a proxy vote by the churches.

1. His duties and responsibilities shall be delineated under a job description of the Board of Directors.
2. The Missions Director may not vote on any business of the Board or Association.
3. The Missions Director shall be an ex-officio member of the Board of Directors and all committees.
4. The Missions Director, or whom he appoints, shall oversee the Ladies State Fellowship.

ARTICLE IX – OTHER EMPLOYEES

All other employees, including Missionary–Pastors, shall be employed by the Board of Directors upon recommendation of the Missions Director and/or the Executive Committee. All employees shall be directly responsible to the Missions Director. They must also be in full agreement with this document.

No employee may be elected to the Board of Directors or serve on committees.

ARTICLE X – ANNUAL MEETING

The Annual Meeting of the Association of Independent Baptist Churches of Illinois shall be held each year on the Monday and Tuesday, following election Tuesday in November. For good reason the Board of Directors may change it.

ARTICLE XI – FINANCE

Section 1 – General Source of Funds

The administration and program of this Association shall be supported by member churches and those who are led to contribute to its support; other related programs are fully or partially supported by fees charged for medical and life insurance, merchandise, and program charges.

Section 2 – Budget, General Fund

The budget will be the general fund budget for all the administration and operating expenses for the Association. The Missions Director will determine the format of the budget. The budget will be approved annually by the Board of Directors and presented for approval of the Association churches at the annual business meeting.

Section 3 – Share Program Fund

Contributions for the missions program will be the Shares program budget and will include all the missionary program support. The Missions Director will determine the format for the Shares program.

- a. The Missions Director will administer church or other contributor designated funds for missions.
- b. The Board of Directors will approve the distribution of Shares fund not designated.

Section 4 – Special Funds

The Board of Directors shall approve any special fund and distribution proposed by the Missions Director. These funds shall be kept separate from all other Association funds.

Section 5 – Designated Contributions

- a. Gifts and offerings designated to missionaries, church planters, and other employees of the Association will be administered by the Missions Director. These funds are separate from all other Association funds. These funds, except for birthday, anniversary, or Christmas gifts, are to be used toward support fund for missionary, church planter, or other employees.
- b. On occasion the Association, in the exercise of its religious, educational, and charitable purposes, may establish special funds to accomplish specific goals. Contributors may also suggest uses for their contributions, but all suggestions shall be deemed advisory rather than mandatory in nature.
- c. All contributions made to special funds or otherwise designated shall remain subject to the exclusive control and approval of the Board of Directors. Any contribution or special designation not approved by the Board of Directors will be returned to the contributor, if he wishes. The Association is not under obligation to use any designated contribution made to the Association other than to use the contribution for the general furtherance of any of the purposes stated in Article II.

Section 6 – Unbudgeted Expenditures

Any expenditure not authorized in the annual budget must be presented to the Board of Directors for approval.

Section 7 – Real Estate Assets

Only the Association at a regular or special business meeting has authority to purchase, sell, mortgage, or encumber any real estate belonging to the Association.

Sections 8 – Fiscal Year

The fiscal year will begin January 1 and end December 31.

ARTICLE XII – TAX EXEMPTION PROVISIONS

Section 1 – Private Inurement:

No part of the net earnings of this corporation shall even inure to the benefit of any donor, director, or officer nor any private individual shall be entitled to share in the distribution of corporate assets except that the Association shall be authorized and empowered to pay reasonable compensation for the services rendered and to make payments and distribution in the furtherance of the purposes set forth in Article II.

Section 2 – Political Activities:

No substantial part of the activities of the Association shall be the carrying on of propaganda or otherwise (attempting to influence legislation), and the corporation shall not participate in, or intervene in (including the publishing or distribution of statements), any political campaign on behalf of any candidate for public office.

Section 3 – Racial Discrimination:

The Association shall have a non-discriminatory racial policy and therefore, shall not discriminate against member churches, church applicants, and others on the basis of race, color, nationality or ethnic origin.

Section 4 – Dissolution

Upon dissolution any assets of the Association, the Board of Directors, or Missions Director, after paying or making provision for payment of all liabilities, shall dispose of remaining assets of the Association to one or more organizations of like faith and practice, as recognized by the Federal Internal Revenue Service under Section 501(c)3 IRS code, and organized exclusively for religious, charitable, scientific, literary, or educational purposes.

ARTICLE XIII – AMENDMENTS

This Constitution may be amended at any Annual Meeting of the Association by a two-thirds vote of those voting, provided the Board of Directors, as well as each member church of the Association, has been provided a written copy of the proposed amendment at least three months before the Annual Meeting. Proposed amendments published in the official publication of the Association (The Illinois Baptist Messenger) shall be acceptable notification. It shall be the responsibility of the Missions Director, or President, to make proper notification of proposed amendments.

ARTICLE XIV – PRIOR DOCUMENTS

All by-laws heretofore adopted or in force in the Association are hereby repealed effective upon the adoption date of the subject by-laws. Further, any other rules, resolutions, or regulations, to the extent to which they are in conflict with the subject by-laws, shall also be repealed at the same time.

ARTICLE XV – POLICY AND PRACTICES

Music Policy: The music used in all meetings and functions of the Association of Independent Baptist Churches of Illinois should always be exemplary and in harmony with the separatist position of our organization. It is to be presented as ministry and not as performance or entertainment. Therefore, the "sound" of the music is distinctly separate from the contemporary and worldly style of culture and must be doctrinally correct and biblically profound. The choice of arrangements must not identify us with the popular CCM (Contemporary Christian Music) or the GMA (Gospel Music Association) artists—even if the music is inherently good. No taped music is allowed as background or accompaniment music.

Version Usage: We require the speakers at our meetings and conferences to use the King James Version.

Revised and adopted April 12, 1999